

## CURRENT AFFAIRS APRIL WEEK 3

### *Anti-dumping duty likely on hydrogen peroxide*

Government is planning to impose anti-dumping duty of up to \$118 per tonne on import of hydrogen peroxide used by industries in applications such as corrosion control and paper bleaching from six countries. The move is aimed at guarding domestic players from cheap imports of 'hydrogen peroxide' from Bangladesh, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand.

Hydrogen peroxide is a **colourless liquid**, slightly **more viscous than water**. Hydrogen peroxide is **the simplest peroxide**. It is used as **an oxidizer**, bleaching agent and disinfectant. It is also used **as ripening agent**.

Because of its instability, hydrogen peroxide is typically stored with a stabilizer in a weakly acidic solution. Hydrogen peroxide is **found in biological systems including the human body**. Enzymes that use or decompose hydrogen peroxide are classified as peroxidases.

### **Civil Services Day:**

The Civil Services Day is organized on 21st April every year, when civil servants re-dedicate themselves to the cause of the citizens and renew their commitment to public service.

This day coincides with the date on which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had addressed the first batch of probationers at the All India Administrative Service Training School at Metcalfe House, New Delhi in 1947.

### *The Government decides to do away with beacons for all categories of vehicles*

With a view to strengthening healthy democratic values in the country, the Central Government has decided to do away with beacons of all kinds atop all categories of vehicles in the country. States are also being stripped of their power to specify persons whose vehicles can use blue flashing lights.

Amendments in this regard will be made in **the Central Motor Vehicles Rules of 1989**. A specific clause in Rule 108 of the 1989 regulations, which empowers the

Centre and the States to designate some dignitaries as entitled to red lights on top of their vehicles, is being abolished. Its abolition would mean that **neither the Centre nor the States would have any dignitary that governments can nominate for the usage of red beacons.**

Beacons on vehicles are perceived symbols of VIP Culture, and the government believes they have no place in a democratic country.

Beacons, however, will be allowed on vehicles concerned with emergency and relief services, ambulance, fire service etc.

### **India, China to resume stalled dialogue on corridor with Myanmar, Bangladesh**

The stalled consultation process for the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar) Economic Corridor is set to resume, with officials and scholars from the four countries shortly meeting in Kolkata after a gap of more than two-and-half years. The last meeting of the Joint Study Group (JSG), which has government sanction, was held at Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh in December 2014.

The idea of creating a corridor of regional integrity was first floated in 1999 but there has been little progress in implementing the grand plan.

The BCIM economic corridor hopes to connect **Kolkata with Kunming**, capital of the Yunnan province. It envisages **formation of a thriving economic belt, focusing on cross-border transport, energy and telecommunication networks.**

Starting from Kunming, the route passes through nodal points, such as Mandalay and Lashio in Myanmar. It heads towards Kolkata after passing through Manipur and Silchar, before crossing Bangladesh via Sylhet and Dhaka, with branches extending to the ports of Cox Bazar and Chittagong.

### **Aryabhata: Looking back at first Indian 'space baby'**

India's first satellite – Aryabhata – was launched successfully by a Russian rocket on 19<sup>th</sup> April 42 years ago in 1975, taking the country on an exciting space odyssey as far as the Moon and the Mars.

Aryabhata is the **first Indian spacecraft** that was also built in the country. Named after the 5th century astronomer, the experimental spacecraft did not last its design

life of six months in space. But this kick-started the Indian capability to build satellites solidly on track.

It was **meant to study distant celestial bodies that emit X-rays, Sun and Earth's ionosphere**. ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC) — which has built nearly 90 bigger and far more sophisticated spacecraft since then — proudly observes **April 19 every year as Aryabhata Day or Technology Day**.

### **Video gaming to be featured at 2022 Asian Games:**

Competitive video games will become a medal sport for the first time ever at the 2022 Asian Games. They will appear as a demonstration event at the 2018 edition of the next Asian Games, to be held in Indonesia, as part of the run-up to esports' official inclusion as a medal sport in the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. It is held every four years.

### **One Part Woman bags Sahitya Akademi award:**

The English translation of writer Perumal Murugan's novel Mathorubhagan (One Part Woman) has won the Sahitya Akademi's award for translation in English. The translation was done by Aniruddhan Vasudevan.

The Sahitya Akademi Award is a literary honor in India, which the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, annually confers on writers of the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages (24 languages, including the 22 listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, along with English and Rajasthani) recognised by the Sahitya Akademi.

### **Channakeshava temple turns 900**

The Channakeshava temple in Belur — a masterpiece of Hoysala architecture — turned 900 this year. Belur, along with Halebid, **is proposed as a UNESCO heritage site**.

The temple, **constructed by Vishnuvardhana of the Hoysala dynasty**, is a monument recognised by the ASI. Considered to be the first temple of Hoysala

style, it was built between 1106 and 1117. The temple is regarded a marvel of architecture in typical Hoysala style. It commemorates the king's victory in 1104.

### **The Battle of Adyar**

History lovers, curious onlookers, veterans and NCC cadets gathered recently in Chennai to commemorate The Battle of Adyar, a turning point in modern Indian history.

The Battle of Adyar took place on 24 October 1746. The battle was between the **French East India Company men and Nawab of Arcot forces over the St. George Fort**, which was held by the French. **It was part of the First Carnatic War between the English and the French.**

The French captured Fort St. George from the British East Indian Company. Nawab of Arcot, a close ally of the British, set out to regain it by sending troops, led by his son Mahfuz Khan, to Madras. While leading an army of 10,000, he was dispersed by French forces, forcing him to move south. Khan seized San Thomé and formed a battle line on the north bank of the Adyar River on October 22 to prevent the French from moving up reinforcements from Pondicherry.

**The Battle of the Adyar River ended with the French retaining control over Fort St. George.**

### **Trump's order targets H-1B programme**

President Trump has signed an executive order that directs federal agencies to review employment immigration laws to promote "Hire American" policies.

- The order makes no immediate changes to work visa programs but tells the Departments of Labor, Justice, Homeland Security and State to study existing laws and procedures and recommend changes.
- In the case of one program, H-1B temporary visas, the order directs the agencies to suggest changes to help ensure that the visas are awarded to the most skilled, best-paid immigrant workers.
- The order also calls for a crackdown on fraud and abuse in the current system of work visas — which the agencies had already signaled they would do.

The H-1B program grants 65,000 work visas a year to foreigners, with 20,000 more visas granted to foreigners with advanced degrees and an unlimited number of extra visas available for universities, teaching hospitals and other non profit organizations. The program is aimed at highly skilled workers, and most of the visas are awarded to technology companies, although other specialty industries such as fashion also use the visas.

- Under federal law, employers that use a large number of H-1B workers are supposed to document that they tried to hire Americans for the jobs. All H-1B employers are also required to pay prevailing wages to the immigrant workers who receive the visas.
- Labor Department data shows that about 40% of the visas go to entry-level workers and another 40% go to people with limited experience and skills. The Trump administration says that more of the jobs performed by those people could and should be filled by Americans.

Visa applications must be sponsored by employers. Every April 1, the government begins accepting applications for the next fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1. This year, the government received 199,000 H-1B applications in the first five days and then stopped accepting them.

Because there are more applicants than visas, the visas are awarded by lottery. Each visa is good for three years and can be renewed for three more years. Immigrants who are applying for a permanent residency visa, known as a green card, can typically stay longer while waiting for approval.

### **Portal and Mobile App of RUSA**

The government has launched the unique portal and mobile app of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).

The portal is a one-stop for States' Higher Education Plans, decision of the States' Higher Education Councils and details of the resources under this scheme.

RUSA was initiated to incentivise and disincentivise state actions. It aimed at creating new universities through upgradation of existing autonomous colleges and conversion of colleges in a cluster.

The scheme was launched in 2013 and aimed at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.

The central funding (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and 100% for union territories) would be norm based and outcome dependent. The funding would flow from the central ministry through the state governments/union territories to the State Higher Education Councils before reaching the identified institutions.

### **PM launches projects related to SAUNI Yojana**

Phase I of SAUNI (Saurashtra Narmada Avtaran Irrigation) project was recently dedicated to the Nation. This is the second milestone in the Rs 12,000 crore project to pump Narmada water in 115 dams of arid Saurashtra region after the PM dedicated to public phase-I of the Link-I canal in August last year.

The project is not a part of the Narmada project but is based on it. 1 MAFT (million acre feet) flood water has been allotted to Saurashtra by the state government and this water will be pumped to major reservoirs in the region under the SAUNI Yojna. Unlike traditional irrigation projects, SAUNI is technically a 'linking' project, where the water will be filled in irrigation dams that are already equipped with canal network. This network of canals will then help channel water into farms.

### **Country's first Vistadome coach inaugurated in Visakhapatnam:**

Indian Railways has launched the country's first ever Vistadome coach services on Visakhapatnam-Araku route. Features of the coaches include glass roof, LED lights, revolving seats and GPS-based info system.

### **Various initiatives on the 126th birth anniversary of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar on 14<sup>th</sup> April.**

#### **1. BHIM Aadhaar platform for merchants:**

BHIM-Aadhaar digital payment platform is the merchant interface of the BHIM App. It will pave the way for making digital payments by using the Aadhaar platform.

Any Indian citizen can pay digitally using their biometric data like their thumb imprint on a merchant's biometric enabled device which could be a smart phone having a biometric reader. Any citizen without access to smart phones, internet, debit or credit cards will be able to transact digitally through the BHIM Aadhaar platform. Already, 27 major banks are now on board with 7.15 lakh merchants so that they can start accepting payments using BHIM Aadhaar.

## 2. **New incentive schemes for the BHIM – Cash back and Referral bonus:**

These schemes have an outlay of Rs. 495 crore for a period of six months. This is to ensure that the culture of digital payments permeates down to the grassroots.

Under the **Referral bonus scheme** both the existing user who refers BHIM and the new user who adopts BHIM would get a cash bonus credited directly to their account. Under the **Cashback scheme** the merchants will get a cash back on every transaction using BHIM.

### **PM to honour 16 Odisha families linked to 1817 revolt**

Descendants of 16 families associated with a little-known but bloody rebellion against British colonialism, called the Paika rebellion of 1817 will be felicitated by the Prime Minister.

Two-hundred years ago in 1817, a valiant uprising of soldiers led by Buxi Jagabandhu (Bidyadhar Mohapatra) took place in Khurda of Odisha. This is known as Paika rebellion.

The Paikas were the traditional land-owning militia of Odisha and served as warriors. When armies of the East India Company overran most of Odisha in 1803, the Raja of Khurda lost his primacy and the power and prestige of the Paikas went on a decline. The British were not comfortable with these aggressive, warlike new subjects and set up a commission under Walter Ewer to look into the issue.

The commission recommended that the hereditary rent-free lands granted to the Paikas be taken over by the British administration and this recommendation was zealously adhered to. They revolted against the British.

Although initially the Company struggled to respond they managed to put down the rebellion by May 1817. Many of the Paik leaders were hung or deported. Jagabandhu surrendered in 1825.

## QUESTIONS

1. The first Indian satellite that was built in the country, was named after a 5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. astronomer. Which of the following is/are texts authored by this astronomer?

1. Aryabhatibhashya
2. Brihatsamhita
3. Aryasiddhanta

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 3 only

Solution: d.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Discussions on the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor predates the formal launch of China's Belt and Road Initiative
2. The BCIM economic corridor will pass through the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal before entering Bangladesh

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: a.

3. The Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) unit generates a paper slip against the pressing of a button by the voter. For confirmation that the vote cast by him has been recorded in favour of the candidate of his choice, the paper slip, also called the ballot slip, will contain only

1. Name of the candidate
2. Serial number of the candidate
3. Name of the voter

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) None of the above

Solution: b.

4. SAUNI Yojana envisages filling more than a hundred major dams in the arid region(s) of

- a) Vidarbha
- b) Hyderabad-Karnataka
- c) Saurashtra
- d) a, b and c

Solution: c.

5. Consider the following statements about temples built under the patronage of an empire in medieval India:

1. Temples built under this style are treasure houses of ornamental and decorative elements

2. The emphasis of decoration is less on the grace of the human body
3. The Vimana of some temples have a star-shaped plan
4. These temples were built in Somnathpura and Belur

The statements given above refer to which one of the following empires?

- a) Hoysalas
- b) Chalukyas of Badami
- c) Western Ganga Dynasty
- d) Rashtrakutas

Solution: a.

6. With reference to the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2016 which was recently passed by the Parliament, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It guarantee access to anti-retroviral drugs and treatment for opportunistic infections
2. The bill lists the various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited
3. The ombudsman appointed by each state government shall submit a report to the state government periodically stating the number and nature of complaints received

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Solution: b.

7. The 'Fund and Reform Tracker' App

- a) Is an app developed to monitor in real time the implementation by states of the Centre's Business Reform Action Plan
- b) Will monitor the implementation of Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana
- c) Will monitor Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan projects from the moment they are sanctioned till their final completion
- d) Will incentivise State Governments to promote behavioural change in the spheres of cleanliness and hygiene

Solution: c.

8. 'Paika Rebellion' refers to an armed uprising against the British East India company in which one of the following present-day states?

- a) Odisha
- b) Tamil Nadu
- c) Madhya Pradesh
- d) Himachal Pradesh

Solution: a.